

One for Sarah; 39th Tracks Down a Killer

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

FOB SOLIDARITY, Iraq -- For Soldiers of the Bowie Brigade's Company A, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, Sahara Latiff, known as Sarah to the guys, was more than just a translator. Her constant, radiant smile brightened everyone's day, making some of the darker moments just a little easier to bear. Sarah was murdered on the morning of Sept. 20. Alpha company has searched for her killers ever since.

During an early morning raid on Oct. 23 in the village outside Camp Solidarity, Soldiers of Company A detained five individuals believed to be involved with the death of Latiff.

"Sarah was one of the good ones," said Pfc. Jimmy Harris, an infantryman from Camden, Ark. assigned to the company. "Nothing ever seemed to really get her down too much. She would gladly go on any mission we asked her to."

When not going out on missions, Latiff was stationed at the back gate where she was an indispensable asset with the many Iraqis who approached the gate. It is believed that Latiff was identified by anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) during her time working at the back gate.

"So many people came up to that gate," said Sgt. William Simkins from Conway, Ark. "One of the bad guys must've seen her back there and put a mark out on her."

The news of Latiff's

murder hit the company hard, everyone was devastated and vowed to bring her killers to justice, but they faced a problem. Tracking down a murderer is difficult even for police back in the states where they can move about the community, questioning witnesses. In a hostile land where traveling outside the wire requires gun-truck convoys, freedom of movement is limited.

"We were forced to rely on the intelligence gathering abilities of the locals in our area, and they came through," said acting first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Floyd Herron of Crossett, Ark. "Friends of Sarah and her family took it upon themselves to seek out who did this and when they thought they had enough information, they brought it to us."

Any intelligence brought to multinational forces must go through a process where it is verified for accuracy. Multiple sources with the same information are typically needed before action is taken.

"Once we got the information, we started checking into it," Herron said. "The last thing anyone wants is to go busting into someone's house, detaining individuals only to find out the information you were working on was completely bogus."

Weeks elapsed between the time of Latiff's killing, to the raid leading to the detention of five men believed to be involved. Planned out in excruciating

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By Spc. Erik LeDrew, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. John Reiss (right) and Sgt. 1st Class William Cavanaugh (center) of the 2nd Brigade "Black Jack" Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, raise the brigade's colors in front of their new tactical operations center at a camp outside of Fallujah Nov. 5, while Sgt. Maj. Rick Purdin looks on.

39th Soldiers Search for Translator's Murderer

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detail, the operation centered on three houses only a few miles away from Camp Solidarity, a location that has seen a recent surge in improvised explosive device (IED) placement and increased resistance from AIF.

Herron said during the investigation, evidence indi-

cated the men they were tracking were not only potentially involved in Latiff's death but were leaders in a cell that was spreading their brand of terror throughout the neighborhood.

"This area has been quiet for a long time," Herron said. "People were friendly [we] never saw too much insurgent activity. But as our investigation continued, the constant fear...in the locals...of these men kept coming up."

Under the cover of darkness the company rolled out and brought their Humvee gun trucks around the location, creating a cordon to prevent any escape. They quickly entered the houses and a full search began. Much to the Soldiers' dismay, the individuals they were looking for were not there. But all was not lost...

A local living in one of the searched houses indicated the individuals were just across the street. The man's fear was apparent when he refused to go with the Soldiers to positively identify the suspects and yet, a solution was found.

Fearing they had lost their opportunity, the troops sprinted across the street, lined up against the outer gate and launched into the building. Within minutes, an excited call of "I think



Photos by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Magnolia, Ark. resident, Spc. John Fitzgerald Hill with Company A, 3rd Battalion 153rd Infantry of the First Team's 39th Brigade Combat Team prepares to enter a house suspected of being the residence of one of the men involved with the killing of Company A translator Sahara Latiff. "We all miss her," he said. "She always greeted everyone like they were her friend."

we got them!" came across the radio.

"Someone get digital pictures of them and get that camera over here," responded Company A Commander, Capt. Joel Lynch, a resident of Shreveport, La.

The man who gave the information had agreed to positively identify the individuals via digital photographs.

Herron said that along with the apprehension of the five men, several pieces of armament and weaponry

were found in the building.

"We got these guys," he said. "We'll start questioning them and figure out exactly their involvement in Sarah's death, maybe even find the trigger puller. The other stuff, the rounds and such seems to confirm our suspicion that these guys, if not leaders, were involved with an insurgent cell operating in the area. So maybe we can bring some justice to Sarah's family and make the neighborhood a little bit safer for its residents."



Soldiers of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry, 39th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division descend a flight of stairs after clearing the upper portion during a raid recently in the search of individuals responsible for the murder of Latiff.

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Do you understand?

hal tafham[ee]

Monday

High: 81
Low: 66



Tuesday

High: 78
Low: 64



Wednesday

High: 80
Low: 62



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

I'll Just Help Myself to a Beer

BEVERLY HILLS, Fla. (AP)

-- A thirsty stranger grabs a beer as he walks into a Citrus County home. Deputies arrested Philip Michael O'Donnell after a couple told authorities he walked into their home Friday, opened the fridge and took out a Bud Light beer. The couple was inside their home as the man entered the house through a door in the garage. The stranger walked out the door after taking the beer and rang the bell of another house. Police were then called and a deputy found O'Donnell walking down the street.

250 Cats Living in House Full of It

ST. CROIX FALLS, Wis. (AP) -- The stench was enough to guide emergency workers to a house where a utility worker had responded to a report of a power outage and found a house full of cats. Police Chief Paul Lindholm described the smell as unbearable and said the cat feces in the building was several inches deep on the floor. Firefighters removed 250 cats from the house, half already dead and the rest so ill they had to be killed. An 86-year-old woman lived in the home with her daughter and son-in-law, but they had not been located. Investigators said they may have been staying with relatives in the area.

Car Clips Killeen Hair Salon

KILLEEN, Texas (*Killeen Daily Herald*) -- Occupants of a Killeen beauty salon got a hair-raising experience Friday, when a car plowed into the business, slightly injuring one customer.

"It sounded like a bomb went off," said Vickie Housmans, a beautician at Cinnabar Hair Design at 1801 Trimmer Road. The crash occurred shortly after 8 a.m.

Juanita Mingst, 85, was transported to Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple, where she was treated and released, said Carroll Smith, Killeen police spokeswoman.

Mingst was sitting in the waiting area of the salon with her back against the wall that the car crashed through, said Johnnie Bannister, the business owner.

When the 2004 Grand Am hit, Bannister said Mingst was pushed forward.

Housmans described the scene as chaotic, but everybody was doing what was necessary to help the injured Mingst.

"Everything happened so fast," Housmans said. "We

Drug Dog Shows Off at Hollie Parsons

COPPERAS COVE, Texas (*Cove Herald*) -- Tee Jee, pronounced Tee Jay, sniffs out drugs for a living. He loves to chase things and chew on his toys. And last Friday he also got another treat. He was the object of the attention of all the third- and fourth-grade students at Hollie Parsons.

Tee Jee is the Belgian Malinois (a breed of dog) partner of Charlie Rodriguez of the Rogers Police Department. Tee Jee has been on the force for almost three years and this was his second visit to Hollie Parsons. His human partner has been in law enforcement since 1995.

"I believe I can make a difference and get some of this stuff out of schools and off the streets," Rodriguez said.



Killeen Daily Herald

Hairdresser Vickie Housmans continues to work on customer Maria Mims' hair as workers try to remove a Pontiac Grand Am after it crashed through the front door of Cinnabar Hair Design in Killeen.

were moving to cut off the car and make sure the lady who was driving was OK, making sure the lady that was under the car was OK and calling 911."

Housmans said someone comforted Mingst until the Killeen Fire Department paramedics arrived. To help Mingst, paramedics had to enter the business by walking over the car that had blocked the entrance, Housmans said.

According to investigators, Irmgard Cline, 77, of Killeen had arrived at the beauty salon at 8:18 a.m. Friday for her hair appointment. She had stopped in a parking slot directly in front of the salon's door.

In her attempt to get closer to the pylon, she inadvertently hit the accelerator instead of her brakes and crashed into the building, Smith said.



Cove Herald

Students at Hollie Parsons School get the opportunity to meet Tee Jee, the Belgian Mallinois trained by Officer Charlie Rodriguez to sniff out drugs.

He told the students that having a dog as a partner is a big help in his work. Together they find narcotics, search for lost children and escapees and protect each other in dangerous situations.

When a student asked if

Tee Jee had ever bitten anyone, Rodriguez said that he hasn't had the opportunity to apprehend anyone yet. The few times he has been released, Rodriguez has called him back for safety reasons.

"He is a police officer, so I have to protect him, too," he said.

Tee Jee lives in Copperas Cove with Charlie, Charlie's wife, Cynthia, a teacher at C.R. Clements, and their daughter Savannah, 7.

Rodriguez put Tee Jee through his paces at the school. He kept Tee Jee in an air-conditioned car while he hid some drug samples in the cafeteria. Then he brought Tee Jee in and released him. Tee Jee immediately sniffed out where the drugs were, to the delight of the children watching.

Texas Rallies for Stunning Comeback

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) -- It must have sounded like a bad joke. Thoroughly dominated in the first half, Texas coach Mack Brown made a big promise to his team: They would win.

Only this was no joke and no false optimism a coach might use just to get his team back on the field in a blowout. It was real.

Cedric Benson scored five touchdowns Saturday night and No. 6 Texas rallied from a 35-7 first-half deficit to beat No. 19 Oklahoma State 56-35.

The Longhorns trailed 35-14 at halftime when Brown told the Longhorns they would score on their first drive of the third quarter and go on to win. He even predicted a final score of 42-35.

"Unbelievable," Brown said. "After the game I apologized for underestimating them."

A little perspective on just how big of a rally it was: In 111 years of playing football, the biggest deficit the Longhorns (8-1, 5-1 Big 12) had ever overcome to win was 19 points three seasons ago in a Holiday Bowl win over Washington.

For Oklahoma State (6-3,



AP

Texas running back Cedric Benson (32) races past Oklahoma State defenders Vernon Grant (20) and Xavier Lawson-Kennedy (90) during the fourth quarter in Austin, Texas, Saturday.

3-3), it should go down as one of the most stunning losses in a long, long time, if not ever.

If the Cowboys had managed to shake off the hangover of their 3-point loss to No. 2 Oklahoma a week earlier, coach Les Miles isn't likely to shake the hurt from this one anytime soon.

"I've never been through one like that," Miles said. "There will be some pain. There's no way to have a game like this where you don't ache."

Trailing by four touchdowns in the first half, the Longhorns scored TDs on five straight possessions to take the lead and control of the game.

A Battle for the Ages at Tour Championship

ATLANTA (AP) -- What used to be routine felt like a novelty to Tiger Woods.

After four straight birdies on his way to a 5-under 65 at East Lake, the former No. 1 player in the world was introduced Saturday as one of the 54-hole leaders in the Tour Championship.

Woods raised his cap in mock celebration, and for good reason. It's been more than a year since he has been in this position.

"I think I've made steady progress," said Woods, who has only one victory this year and lost his No. 1 ranking two months ago to Vijay Singh. "This is just merely a continuation of it."

Woods was tied with 50-year-old Jay Haas, who recovered from two early bogeys for

a 68. They were at 9-under 201 and will be paired together Sunday, two close friends born 22 years apart who haven't won in a while.

"I definitely won't be the favorite tomorrow," Haas said. "But what he does shouldn't affect what I do."

Woods lost 36-hole leads in back-to-back weeks in May, the first sign that he no longer was the dominant force he was. That's what makes Sunday such an interesting test.

Woods is ruthless with at least a share of the 54-hole lead, winning 30 of 32 times in that position. Putting together his best back-to-back rounds in four years only made him feel that much more confident.

"I'm going to give it my best," Woods said.



AP

Tiger Woods hits out of the gallery on the second green during the third round of the Tour Championship Saturday.

In Brief

Lost Beatles Tape to Air on AMAs

NEW YORK (AP) -- This year's American Music Awards will feature stars such as Usher, Alicia Keys, Gwen Stefani and Rod Stewart, but the most talked-about moment might come from the Beatles. The show plans to air a 2 1/2-minute tape from 1964 that was recently discovered. "We've got a wonderful old ... tape that's been lost for 40 years that nobody's seen since it first aired featuring the Beatles singing 'She Loves You' and 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand,'" producer Dick Clark said. "It was an English show that aired here that for some reason or another went into a trunk somewhere."

Judge Tells Busey: Pay the \$30,000!

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Actor Gary Busey walked into court and handed over a check for \$30,000 to settle a lawsuit accusing him of falling behind on the rent for his Malibu house, court officials said. Busey, 60, has lived in the modest three-bedroom hillside home with ocean views for more than 10 years. His lawyer, Vicki Roberts, said Saturday that Busey stopped paying the \$6,000 monthly rent after complaining to the landlord that dust, dirt and mold in the ventilation system was affecting his breathing. The settlement requires the landlord to do all necessary repairs, including the ventilation system, Roberts said.